W P R B

ANNUAL BANQUET

in celebration of

twenty-five years of operation

APRIL 22, 1966

OPENING REMARKS

LAWRENCE GAHAGAN

Station Manager, WPRB

PRESENTATION OF THE
IVY BROADCASTERS AWARD

T'ING PEI

President, The Ivy Network

TOASTMASTER

STEPHEN LUBUNSKI

President, NBC Radio Network

GUEST SPEAKER

KENNETH A. COX

Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

In the college year 1940-1941 a group of Princeton University undergraduates began operation of a radio station from one of their rooms in Pyne Hall. After a brief interruption in service during the Second World War, the station began operation anew with a 250 watt AM transmitter, which was electrically coupled to the power line. During the day select FM radio stations were rebroadcast to the Princeton campus on WPRU's frequency of 540 kc., and at night live programming was featured.

This operation continued until 1955 when an FCC check showed that the station could be heard near railroad tracks as far away as South Carolina. Apparently some of the station's radiation was getting into the railroad power lines near Princeton and being transferred over great distances.

The FCC shutdown that resulted might have closed the station for good, were it not for WPRU's adoption of a series of small AM transmitters, referred to as "black boxes," each of which radiated to only one dormitory. The FCC helped by accepting WPRU's application for a commercial FM license —the first to be granted to a college station. The call letters of the 85 watt station were changed to WPRB, and a used 250 watt transmitter was connected to a home built antenna as broadcasting commenced at 103.9 mc.

WPRB was granted a power increase to 250 watts, and then an application was submitted for 1 kilowatt. This was rejected,

– 110 Woodworth beyond

but less than a year later (in 1956) the station applied for and received a 17,000 watt commercial license — the largest to be issued to a student owned-and-operated station. WPRB became New Jersey's second most powerful station.

As the student staff, which kept the station on the air 24 hours a day, came to grips with serving an audience of 10 million people in an area bounded by New York and Philadelphia, the station received a financial shot in the arm when another broadcaster, who shared WPRB's frequency of 103.5, paid the station $10,000 to move to 103.3 so as to reduce interference to the other station.

With this money available the staff was able to realize a long awaited goal — FM stereo transmission. In the fall of 1963 WPRB became the first college station to broadcast in stereo. Subsequently the old monaural studios were rebuilt, and for the first time it became practical to offer separate programming to the campus audience on 640 kc. while retaining a distinctive college sound at 103.3 mc.